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LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

FRANCE.

I would have many works indeed to call to the attention of the readers of *The Monist* were I to include all the branches of philosophical science. I prefer to confine myself to those whose subject bears a close relation to the philosophy of science and the science of religion.

First of all I will mention among the works on history and criticism, *Platon* by M. Cl. Piat, *Pierre Bayle* by M. Delvolve, and *Leibniz* by M. Baruzi.¹ M. Piat's study is very learned and sensible; that of M. Delvolve very curious and interesting, and not less so is that of M. Baruzi which undertakes to bring out vividly the great views of Leibnitz on the "religious organization of the earth."

The figures of the two philosophers Bayle and Leibnitz are found also in M. Joseph Fabre's *La pensée moderne*, which is the third volume of a series of five whose object is to give us the vast panorama of human thought from antiquity up to the present day. This volume takes us from Luther to Leibnitz.

Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza (and to these are joined Galileo, Bacon, Malebranche, Hobbes, Newton) are shown here in all their glory. M. Fabre has known how to make his analysis briefly, and to present the doctrines skillfully without a tiresome display of erudition. The curiosity of the reader is no less strongly attracted by less familiar figures arranged in their place in the "movements of ideas," where they are given their real significance. Accordingly in books one, five and seven we find discussed the Catholic crisis and the advent of Protestantism, the continued protestation with the dissenters of the seventeenth century, and finally the Puritan reformation with the initiators of the American Revolution. It is enough to speak of the enormous work accomplished by the author and to indicate its value and lofty range.

M. H. Delacroix gives us his painstaking and remarkable studies in his specialty, the history and psychology of mysticism, (*Etudes d'histoire et la psychologie du mysticisme*). The three great types investigated are St. Theresa, Mme. Guyon and Suso with some minor ones, taken in different environments and at different epochs, in order to restore more accurately the elements of which the mystical experience is composed. M. Delacroix does not limit himself to that passive form of mysticism, ecstacy (the treatment here is con-

¹ These volumes and those that follow are published by F. Alcan, Paris.

cerned only with Christian mystics); he rightly shows (and your distinguished compatriot Josiah Moses was wrong in this point) that mysticism in its larger forms reveals itself as active, expansive and creative.

M. Rogues de Fursac relates and describes as an eye-witness the religious revival of the district of Galles (1904 to 1905) under the title, "A Contemporaneous Mystical Movement" (*Un mouvement mystique contemporain*). He writes with sympathy and as an observant spectator. M. Revant d'Allonne in "The Psychology of a Religion" (*La psychologie d'une religion*) treats from the point of view of the specialist in psychiatry the complex phenomena of revelation and religious inspiration in the personality and work of Guillaume Monod (1800-1896) that "Resurrected Jesus" who has his church and his followers in our modern Paris.

The ethical problem never ceases to occupy the minds of thoughtful people, and this problem which so profoundly engages one's entire life becomes imperative in the present crisis when morality no longer finds a solid foundation upon which to lean outside of the various religions. How different are the points of view from which each person considers the question of morals! M. G. Belot in his "Studies of Positive Ethics" (*Etudes de morale positive*) proves himself to be a sociologist and a utilitarian. M. Fouillée in his *Morale des idées-forces* does not intend to leave technically philosophical ground and flatters himself that he can construct a doctrinal ethics which is convincing. M. Albert Bayet lays his foundation on the idea of good (this is the title of his book, *L'idée de bien*) and conceives as possible a rational ethical art in which science would play a subordinate part. Moreover, he rejects utilitarianism as well as all so-called scientific ethics. The idea of good in his eyes is a relative idea, changing as its object changes, and religious men themselves are compelled to arrive at the conclusion that there can not exist a "universal and holy ethics."

Is it not true on the whole, as I have more than once written here and elsewhere, that we ought not to confound the purely psychological aspect of moral phenomena with their practical aspect? Is it not also true that what we call moral obligation or moral imperative is the result of a psychological impulse as are faith and habit, while duties which are the object of ethics, grow from life itself, that is to say, they are the expression of judgments and feelings in terms of experience? Such in my opinion are the two

essential features of all moral doctrine which can be regarded as positive.

We now come to the bold attempt of M. H. Bergson to apply to biology his concept of "real duration" as distinguished from "abstract time," an expression which sums up the influence of the past on the present and the future. But this expression implies something else in the metaphysics of M. Bergson. It implies liberty, the power of creation, and this is the explanation of the title of the book, "Creative Evolution," (*L'évolution créatrice*). Its final purpose is to take up anew in the light of present-day knowledge the great problem of the origin of life.

M. Bergson's subject leads him to discuss the ideas of finality, chance, non-existence, order, and he does it in pages which are among the best that he has written. I greatly appreciate his shrewd and penetrating criticisms; for instance, that of the principles invoked by the mechanists on the one hand and the finalists on the other. But perhaps he is too complacent in the use of such vague expressions as tendencies, vital enthusiasm, etc., and I find myself in the position of a skeptic, a doubter, after permitting myself to be carried away upon the wings of his metaphors. In the mechanistic theory determinism takes the place of an intelligent God; in finalism a certain force of attraction or repulsion occupies that place. In the "creative evolutionism" of M. Bergson it is activity, and time; it is vital enthusiasm and duration. As contradictory as these leading ideas seem to be and as uneven as their critical efficacy can be, are they not in some respects nevertheless possible substitutes for each other and do they not symbolize a provisional synthesis of the same facts? This difficulty always remains that even if all is not given it nevertheless seems that all can be made with that which is given.

I will refrain from making any further remarks. It is impossible to give in a few lines a satisfactory sketch of a work of such importance.

At the last minute I have just received a work by M. l'abbé Lucien Roure, "Face to Face with the Religious Fact" (*En face du fait religieux*),² the title of which alone shows that the author has intended a direct and vigorous work. The religious problem, religious sentiment and its varieties, mysticism and its explanations, religion and life,—such are the subjects treated, and, I will add, treated with eloquence and warmth. In the chapter on varieties of

² Paris: Perrin, 1908.

the religious sentiment there are some instructive pages on "immanentism," or the method of immanence recently discussed in France in a talented manner by Father Laberthonnière, but condemned by Rome. The chapters devoted to mysticism are particularly interesting in that they show accurately the point of view of the Catholic Church on this delicate question. I observe that here as in the *Etudes* of M. Delacroix the character of activity is to be found in Christian mystics, among whom the quietists do not hold a legitimate place, according to Abbé Roure. In this connection and with regard to the religious significance of facts without now investigating their psychological definition, the alternative is not imposed upon us to know whether mystical phenomena prove faith or whether it is faith which gives form to mystical phenomena.

This work raises still further questions, but I have reached the limit of this short note.

LUCIEN ARREAT.

PARIS, FRANCE.

DER VORCHRISTLICHE JESUS.*

EXTRACTS FROM A REVIEW BY PROF. DR. KARL BORINSKI.

(Translated from *Xenien*, I., pp. 45-71.)

A book by an American professor of mathematics, which would establish with geometric rigor and precision an entirely new theory of Jesus and the Origins of Christianity, is not thereby, in and of itself, either mathematically or theologically, a phenomenon of interest and importance. Theological mathematicians are in far worse repute than even mathematical theologians. To the latter indeed Kant would seem to have given a final quietus, but the former do yet greatly abound. Alas! it is commonly not the profound martyr-spirit of a Pascal but the cabalistic folly of a Newton, so repellent to the Voltaires and Du Bois Reymonds, that will not let them sleep. In our own time an Italian professor of mathematics has sought to "prove" in a ponderous tome, by a measureless array of figures and formulas, the nonsensical thesis that Dante's Delectable Mountain in the first canto of the Inferno is identical with his Mount of Purgatory. Of the recent American proofs for and against the forbidden fruit of Paradise, the less said, the better....

* William Benjamin Smith, *Der vorchristliche Jesus* nebst weiteren Vorstudien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums. Mit einem Vorwort von Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel. Alfred Toeplmann: Giessen, 1906: